

DEKALB COUNTY

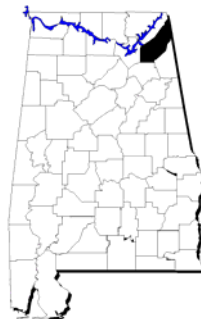
Honorable Steve L. Whitmire

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Council Priorities

1. Limited use of child health preventative services.

Increased knowledge and use of child preventative services.

2. Concerns regarding large number of sexually active teens.

Hope to decrease rates in both sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancy.

3. Obesity rate

Decrease rates of obesity throughout the area.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Child care assistance for working parents

Action Steps

- 1) Identify and pursue funding for child care payment assistance.
- 2) Increase public awareness of the learning potential for children ages 0 -5.
- 3) Establish a composite of all services available in DeKalb County for children ages 0 -5.

Parental awareness of needs of children ages 0 - 5

Action Steps

- 1) Identify parent training that is available to parents in DeKalb County.
- 2) Increase intra-agency networking to share resources and information.
- 3) Identify incentives to motivate parents to participate in parenting classes.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Provide family assistance for the children of Dekalb County so their homes can become financially stable and meet their needs

Action Steps

- 1) Locate places to provide application for food stamps, WIC and All Kids so that the general public will have easy access.
- 2) Work with DHR (Welfare to Work Program) and North Alabama Skills Center to help establish a family resource center.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Lack of funding for Fort Payne City & Dekalb County Schools from state & local resources

Action Steps

- 1) Approach local leaders to request additional local funding.
- 2) Increase public awareness of state report card results including local funding efforts.
- 3) Develop a plan for disbursement of any additional local funds and share plan with public.

Lack of proficiency in reading based on standardized test results

Action Steps

- 1) Increase parental awareness of standardized test results in reading.
- 2) Provide in depth professional development opportunities for teachers in the area of literacy.
- 3) Provide students with scientifically based research programs in reading designed to increase proficiency in reading fluency and comprehension.

Inability of some students to successfully complete certain sections of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (A.H.S.G.E.)

Action Steps

- 1) Identify students unable to successfully complete any portion of the A.H.S.G.E.
- 2) Evaluate current curriculum
- 3) Provide remediation in the subject area(s) needed.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Limited use of child health care preventive services

Action Steps

- 1) Provide education opportunities to the Hispanic community regarding the benefits of prenatal care and routine well child checks.
- 2) Provide Spanish educational material regarding car seats, safety issues and child care.
- 3) Educate parents regarding the potential risks related to not receiving prenatal care.

Concerns regarding the large number of sexually active teens

Action Steps

- 1) Promote public awareness of the dangers/risks of STD's and teen pregnancy.
- 2) Support in-school based programs regarding the concerns related to STD's and teen pregnancy.
- 3) Provide written materials in Spanish in an attempt to reach the Hispanic community.

Obesity rate

Action Steps

- 1) Provide educational opportunities to children and families regarding the risks of obesity.
- 2) Education regarding the benefits of physical activity.
- 3) Education regarding the benefits of healthy diets (increasing fruit and vegetable intake).

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Lack of appropriate parenting skills and involvement indicated by an increase in parental drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, increase in child abuse and neglect reports and increase in reported behavior problems from day care to high school

Action Steps

- 1) Increase interagency networking to share resources and information.
- 2) Identify incentives and motivators to increase parent's interest and participation in parenting education classes.
- 3) Research and apply for grants for parenting classes that include funding to provide incentives for parents.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Children exposed to use and making of crystal methamphetamine in their home

Action Steps

- 1) Develop cost free intensive outpatient treatment for patients to be attended voluntarily without court intervention.
- 2) Expand local transportation routes through rural areas and offer after business hours transportation.
- 3) Develop opportunities for local police departments to partner with child abuse/neglect investigators to provide a joint approach to offering community resources.

Children suffering mental illness conditions without local non-residential treatment

Action Steps

- 1) Expand mental health counseling and supportive services to children.
- 2) Develop aftercare services for children with mental illnesses returning to the community from residential treatment facilities.

Policy Recommendations

- Reinstitute or utilize the Child Health Program.
- Make CPR/safety training mandatory for parents.
- Mandate STD/teen pregnancy prevention training in local schools.
- Increase number of physical education requirements to graduate high school.
- Require physicians to address obesity during Medicaid EPSDT screenings.